



WEBB-WARING LUNG INSTITUTE

January 4, 1989

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
The Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, NY 10021-6399

Dear Joshua:

Attached is something I have written for a book of personal memoirs of immunologists that Szentivanyi is editing.

✓ You have been kind enough to comment on my feeble efforts in the past. Is the difference in scientific philosophy between biologist and physicist a subject deserving further study?

Very few biological situations are sufficiently well controlled to admit the quantitative rigor available to physicists. Where to we make measurements to 4 decimal places

Sincerely yours,

David W. Talmage, M.D.
Distinguished Professor

DWT/mrd
enclosure

✓ of course worthy of study! Your personal statement is a rather beyond argument. Your projections about the history of thought wanting scrutiny by a professional like I. B. Cohen. I would have been more explicit about the role of the hypothesis of vitalism. Outside microbiology, mechanistic biology did have important play: Harvey, Descartes. Re microscope, it was invented in the 17th Century. You want to ask, who followed Hooke and Leeuwenhoek in the study of microbes? Pisa and MacLeod are misapprehended. I think Galileo used inclined planes to study acceleration: it's hard to see how the Tower would have helped. Ask: what was his clock?